

Message Text

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PAGE 01 QUITO 02296 081628Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-02 ICA-20
SP-02 /049 W

-----062053 081639Z /70

P R 081450Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY QUITO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7875
INFO AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL
DIA WASHDC
USCINCSO QUARRY HTS CZ
74TH CONTW HOWARD AFB CZ-IN

UNCLAS QUITO 2296

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, PORS, EC
SUBJECT: ANTI-BUS FARE INCREASE VIOLENCE SLACKENS

REF: QUITO 2238

1. STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS PROTESTING A 40 PCT BUS FARE INCREASE DIMINISHED APRIL 7. VIOLENT CLASHES BETWEEN STUDENTS AND POLICE ALSO DECREASED THROUGHOUT THE DAY IN QUITO. HOWEVER, FOLLOWING AN EVENING PROTEST RALLY AT THE CENTRAL UNIVERSITY THREATRE, POLICE ARRESTED 20 ROCK-THROWERS IN THE IMMEDIATE ENVIRONS OF THE UNIVERSITY. GUAYAQUIL, WHOSE SCHOOLS ARE ON VACATION, REMAINED QUIET.

2. RUMORS THAT THE ARRESTED PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY STUDENT FEDERATION HAD DIED IN JAIL CIRCULATED IN QUITO IN THE EARLY AFTERNOON, BUT THE AUTHORITIES RESPONDED QUICKLY BY INVITING THE MEDIA TO VIEW HIM ALIVE AND WELL IN HIS CELL. IN ANOTHER PUBLIC RELATIONS GESTURE, THE POLICE BEGAN RELEASING SOME OF THE 300 ARRESTED STUDENTS, SLASHING THEIR FINES IN HALF IN MANY CASES AND ELIMINATING THEM IN OTHERS. A FEW BUSES, WELL PROTECTED AGAINST ROCKS
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PAGE 02 QUITO 02296 081628Z

WITH BOARDS AND MESH, VENTURED OUT ON CITY STREETS IN THE AFTERNOON.

3. COMMENT: IT APPEARS THAT THE WORST OF THE RIOTS IS OVER AND IT IS GENERALLY EXPECTED THAT NORMAL TRAFFIC WILL RESUME BY MONDAY. HOWEVER, THESE DEMONSTRATIONS, WHICH SLOWED DOWN BUSINESS IN QUITO FOR NEARLY FOUR DAYS,

PRESAGED SIMILAR DISTURBANCES IF AND WHEN THE GOE DECIDES
TO AUTHORIZE A GASOLINE PRICE INCREASE LATER THIS YEAR.
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Message Attributes

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